



Federal Fish Passage Action Plan

November, 2006

***A product of the
Federal Voluntary Fish Passage Delivery
National Coordination Workshop
November 8-9, 2006***

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Preface

On November 8-9, 2006, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service co-hosted a national fish passage coordination workshop in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Approximately 50 representatives from 15 Federal agencies were invited to build support and commitment for fish passage activities and establish a coordinated Fish Passage Action Plan to provide long-term leadership in enhancing and conserving the Nation's aquatic resources through voluntary fish passage.

This is the first time that Federal fish passage practitioners and policymakers convened a national forum to work towards a common goal of facilitating fish passage in a comprehensive fashion. The workshop provided a mechanism through which Federal partners jointly identified strategies and resources to focus and coordinate efforts on voluntary fish passage. Interagency, multi-disciplinary breakout groups identified action items, leads, and dates for completion of specific activities within five major themes:

- Data, Information and Tools
- Environmental Compliance
- Funding
- Technical Assistance
- Science and Evaluation

Ten agencies and two non-profit organizations were represented at the workshop. This Action Plan is the raw product that resulted. Detailed session notes were also captured, but are not included here. This Action Plan is a living document that will undergo revision and update as interagency coordination on fish passage proceeds. The Shared Vision that follows is a compilation of ideas generated by workshop participants that will continue to be refined. The Shared Vision and the Action Plan represent a starting point from which interagency coordination on fish passage will move forward starting at the national level. Expanding the current effort to include Tribes, states, non-profit organizations and other interested parties will be critical to ensure broad public and private support for these efforts.

A long-term Steering Committee was identified as a critical need to keep the Federal fish passage community moving forward together. Agency participation in the Steering Committee was established at the workshop; the leadership structure will be decided and necessary roles filled before the end of 2006. The Steering Committee's first objectives are to revise and finalize the Shared Vision for Federal fish passage initiated by workshop participants, establish standing working groups based on commitments made toward achieving Fish Passage Action Plan contributions, and address items that were recommended by workshop participants for Steering Committee follow-up.

A Shared Vision for Federal Fish Passage

(DRAFT – to be finalized by Steering Committee)

The future we want to help create...

- As a result of focusing on priorities, reconnecting fragmented riverine habitat and repairing riparian habitat, restrictions on restoration will be removed, and *all* native organisms, at all stages of life, will move freely and thrive
- As a forum for federal coordination, we will provide leadership and strategic direction for the fish passage community
- We will use a more collaborative approach to planning, budgeting and advocacy, and establish a clear communications framework and formalized structure
- We will define shared, objective priorities and establish joint funding initiatives for priority projects
- We will be a “one stop shop” for easy access to centralized, coordinated federal resources for public and private uses
- We will share information, consolidating our tools to maximize their value and consistently applying best practices across agencies
- We will coordinate research and monitoring efforts and collaborate to heighten standards and maximize effectiveness
- We will agree upon national standards for inventory, permitting, and regulatory agencies
- Using a prioritized watershed approach, we will share watershed-level data and information to identify all blockages, strategize and prioritize our efforts

Steering Committee

Steering Committee Members

- Ellen Cummings (USACE)
- Robin Schrock (USGS)
- Mark Hudy (USFS)
- Leslie Hartsell (FWS)
- Robin Bruckner (NOAA)
- Howard Hankin (NRCS)
- BLM (TBD)
- H.C. Staff?
- BOR?
- DOT?

Steering Committee Roles and Responsibilities

- Champion cross-Agency policy and funding support for fish passage
- Oversee implementation of Fish Passage Action Plan (update periodically)
- Facilitate communication among stakeholders across the fish passage community
- Establish and sustain tools for communication and information exchange (website/portal*, listserve, etc.)
- Coordinate prioritization of efforts (e.g. identify model projects, prioritize watersheds)
- Coordinate standards where necessary
- Promote early interagency coordination on large and small scale infrastructure projects impacting fish passage
 - Define interagency coordination protocol
 - Capture lessons learned (successes and failures)
 - Define large-scale and/or controversial infrastructure
 - Involve the consulting agencies early in the planning process
 - *Refer to ESA Consultation Handbook*

**Gabrielle (USGS) – may be able to support portal*

Steering Committee Meetings

- Annual face-to-face session
- Monthly or quarterly telecons

Potential fish passage community meeting opportunities:

- International Conference on Ecology and Transportation – March, 2007
- Ecosystem Restoration Conference – April 23, 2007
- American Fisheries Society – Sept. 2-6, 2007

Steering Committee Action Items:

Action	Lead	Due Date
Short-Term Actions		
1. Establish Steering Committee leadership structure and charter.	Steering Committee	12/1/06
2. Establish Working Groups to implement Action Plan (chairs and members).	Leads as identified	12/15/06
3. Propose “Guiding Principles” for the community (<i>refer to “Stream Corridor Restoration Manual”</i>).	Steering Committee	12/15/06
4. Refine Vision statement for fish passage community.	Steering Committee	12/15/06
5. Develop briefing paper to articulate value of coordination and collaborative efforts.	Lead TBD	1/1/07
6. Set dates and initiate action on future fish passage coordination sessions.	Lead TBD	1/1/07
Mid-Term Actions		
7. Identify higher level body to carry effort forward (<i>refer to models – hypoxia, coral reef, etc.</i>).	Steering Committee Chair	
8. Recommend structure for coordination and collaboration (geographic, geopolitical, etc.).	Steering Committee Chair	
9. Define impact of FACA on this effort (<i>see NFHAP</i>).	Lead TBD	

Focus Area: Data, Information and Tools

Lead: Leslie Hartsell (FWS)

Facilitator: Marti McGuire (NOAA)

Note taker: Mike Peccini (NOAA)

Participants

- John Wullschleger (NPS)
- Dave Gordon (FWS)
- Richard Takacs (NOAA)
- Shaun McKinney (NRCS)
- Stephanie Hunt (NOAA)

Current Situation

- 1. What are the most critical contextual factors that this community should be aware of for this focus area?**
 - Resolution and scale of needs are not resolved in a coherent framework from a national to a local level
 - Data varies in quality, availability, accessibility, and associated staff resources and skill sets are insufficient
 - Key need is to identify and communicate existing data, tools, and expertise
- 2. What is the general state of cross-Agency collaboration (or lack thereof) in this focus area?**
 - Collaboration is piecemeal rather than under some larger initiative
 - Efforts are limited by data sharing issues:
 - Reluctance to share
 - Security
 - Lack of standards

Key Strategies

- **Establish over-arching communication framework to facilitate information exchange**
 - Check with other Focus Areas to consider how to tie specific needs to comprehensive communications framework
 - Create team for data perspective
 - Identify existing data tools and efforts (key informational nodes, clearinghouses, etc.)
 - Identify key contacts/links between efforts (coordinate with NFHAP)

Focus Area: Data, Information and Tools

- **Establish a common inventory of barrier data**
 - Develop data workgroup to provide guidance (consider broad community)
 - Identify, evaluate and link to existing data sets
 - Recommend minimum baseline data to be provided by user groups
 - Define barriers (encompass all types, e.g. thermal, temporary, permanent, lateral, debris, etc.)
 - Identify key “barrier data” types and standards (e.g. barrier to what, impact, associated management goals, watershed effects, etc.)
 - Define parameters and process for data collection to ensure standardization
 - Include outreach to barrier owners and beneficiaries
 - Be sensitive to implications of posting data and info on owners, users, those who benefit from barrier, etc.

- **Perform information and/or data sharing needs assessment for the fish passage community**
 - Define audience (include the invasive species management community)
 - Compile list of existing tools; survey users (and potential users) of existing tools and assess their utility and potential needs for new tools
 - Use prior efforts that articulate needs to inform needs assessment (e.g. take results of NFHAP data summit and review Hadley workshop to find common themes in regards to data and tool gaps)

Action Plan:

Action	Lead	Due Date
Strategy 1: Define communication framework		
10. Draft over-arching Communication Framework as a white paper. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with each Focus Area to define communication needs. 	Shaun McKinney	11/30/06
11. Based on NFHAP Summit report out, identify links between NFHAP and Fish Passage Workshops' data needs.	Marti McGuire and Leslie Hartsell	By 11/30/06 (depends on NFHAP)
Strategy 2: Identify key barrier data standards		
1. Identify working group and define approach. <i>(Additional Action Items contingent on actions under Strategy 1 and 3)</i>	Leslie Hartsell	TBD
Strategy 3: Perform data and information needs assessment		
1. Identify working group and define approach.	Leslie Hartsell;	11/30/06
2. Identify key contacts to contribute to needs assessment and list of tools used.	All identified members	

Focus Area: Environmental Compliance

Lead: Paul Anderson (USFS)

Facilitator: Kim Lellis (NOAA)

Note taker: David Landsman (NOAA)

Participants

- Paul Anderson (USFS)
- Dennis Durbin (DOT)
- Linda Anderson (FHWA)
- Steve Pugh (USACE)
- Jeanette Gallihugh (USACE)
- Cathy Bozek (NOAA)
- Richard Bulavinetz (BLM)
- Jeff Shenot (NOAA)
- Kim Lellis (NOAA)
- David Landsman (NOAA)

Current Situation

1. What are the most critical contextual factors that this community should be aware of for this focus area?

- Conflicting resource uses / priorities between agencies forces agencies to make trade-offs
- There is no single Federal view on implementation of environmental compliance – makes it difficult to “share” analysis and build cross-agency procedures
- There is need for monitoring to assist in future decision making

2. What is the general state of cross-Agency collaboration (or lack thereof) in this focus area?

- On-the-ground regional collaboration may be difficult between agencies
- It is important to collaborate/coordinate early (currently there is no uniform approach)
- We need to collect data in standardized format so data can be shared

Key Strategies

- **Establish ACOE regional general permit**
 - Provide a “one-stop shop” for environmental compliance for fish passage
 - Develop ACOE regional / nationwide permit for fish passage projects. This would include all NEPA issues (e.g. NOAA and USFWS ESA, SHPO, EFH, etc.). There is an example of a regional general permit for small “restoration” projects in San Francisco Corps District (much of N. California).
 - Start with “small” fish passage project regional permit.
 - ACOE would be “action agency” when they give the 404 permit, and would apply to anyone (local, state, fed) needing a 404 permit before completing project.

Focus Area: Environmental Compliance

- **Provide Joint Fish Passage Training**
 - Encourage and support early coordination / cooperation through (multi-agency) training on fish passage that includes environmental compliance
 - Coordinate interagency fish passage training on a regional basis on best management practices and environmental compliance issues (NEPA, CWA, ESA, SHPO, etc). Would include consolidated training on tools that have been developed for fish passage. Coordinated course would be aimed at the “201” level.
 - Hold joint (multi-agency) routine workshops / meetings (*see example of fish passage coordinating group in California*).
 - Decide on frequency (quarterly? Semi-annually?)
 - Decide on scale (watershed? Regionally? Nationally?) on fish passage that includes environmental compliance
 - Larger, more complex projects should require coordination plan (currently required for large FERC projects; not currently required for large, voluntary projects).

- **Long-term strategy: Define Performance Measures**
 - Project-specific performance measures: How can a project comply with “performance measures” (e.g. mitigation measures, best management practices, terms and conditions) established in permit / Biological Opinion?
 - Process-oriented performance measures: How long does it take to complete a Biological Opinion? Permit? How much staff time devoted to completing environmental compliance documentation? *[Note: Kim Lellis had additional thoughts on performance measures re: process for NOAA]*

Action Plan:

Action	Lead	Due Date
Strategy 1: Establish ACOE regional general permit.		
1. Define possibility for regional general permits with regards to fish passage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at existing NW Fish Passage Biological Opinions (both NOAA and USFWS) into NW ACOE regional general permit 	Ellen Cummings [Army Corps to coordinate with different agencies]	
Strategy 2: Joint Fish Passage Training		
1. Designate national-level working group to develop and implement joint training program. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess existing training efforts and needs • Define focus (federal, state, etc.) • Focus on packaging and coordination of existing efforts, not development of <i>new</i> training • Refer to bioengineering section of the American Fisheries Society course curriculum 	Lead TBD	

Focus Area: Funding

Lead: Robin Bruckner

Facilitator: Tisa Shostik

Note taker: Summer Morlock/Kay McGraw

Participants

- Bruce Taggart (USGS)
- Albert Cerna (NRCS)
- Jarred Kosa (USFWS)
- Rosana Barkawi (USFS)
- Elizabeth Maclin (AR)

Current Situation

1. What are the most critical contextual factors that this community should be aware of for this focus area?

- All federal agencies are not involved – we need to engage others (e.g. EPA, FERC, DOE, FEMA, BIA); also need to engage different programs within agencies (regulatory and non-regulatory) – think beyond couching this as "fish passage"
- Funding is a two-pronged issue: How to use limited current resources and how to get more
- Transfer of funding between agencies is difficult
- Partnerships are a key opportunity

2. What is the general state of cross-Agency collaboration (or lack thereof) in this focus area?

- Collaboration is fragmented – there is no clear understanding of what each Agency is doing nationally, and there is too much focus on individual agencies
- There are discrepancies in scale at national field level
- Feds do not have a clear understanding of what NGO capabilities and resources are – we need to know and share information
- Some good examples of cross-agency planning exist (e.g. ORI, Connecticut River Initiative, etc.)
- Tying into the National Fish Habitat Action Plan could enhance our efforts

Focus Area: Funding

Key Strategies

- **Establish cross-federal database of funding resources (within bounds identified)**
 - Focus primarily on fish passage; ancillary use for TMDL, historic preservation
 - Differentiate different phases/components of projects
 - Provide info/limitations of agencies
 - Rationale for database – to increase coordination and to serve as an information tool
 - Clearly define data fields – only go to folks *once* for information
 - Include funding availability, sources, contacts, levels, individual agency processes/mechanisms, policy priority factors (i.e., ESA, multiple species benefits, performance measures), funding and decision-making timelines and budgeting cycles, eligibility and restrictions
 - Focus on Department, then state level
 - Maintain as a “living document”
 - Coordinate with Technical Assistance team to potentially included sources for technical, as well as funding, resources
 - First audience is federal family; subsequently for constituents; include partner funds (NGOs, etc.)
 - Consider using existing templates/models (e.g., American Rivers, Restore American’s Estuaries)
- **Publish “Accomplishments Report”**
 - Provide multiple Agency-wide perspectives on performance on federal fish passage efforts
 - Collate what is already available with minimal effort, e.g. end-of-year reports, summaries, performance measures, data, fact sheets, photos, outcomes, the “so-what’s”
 - Consider dams, culverts, fish passage structures, etc.
 - Performance measures could include mileage, technical services provided, funding appropriated, leverage, acres, #species benefited
 - Define, “What was unmet need?”
 - List partners, include photos, etc.
 - Support an understanding of the importance of this information collecting among agencies
 - Identify and address policy issues and road blocks as to whether this information can be shared
 - Rationale: We need to provide an outreach product to our advocates (AR, other NGOs, etc.); hopefully will lead to increased resources and visibility of what was accomplished
 - *Refer to the “President’s Wetlands Report”*

Focus Area: Funding

Action Plan:

Action	Lead	Due Date
Strategy 1: Funding table/database for us (feds)		
1. Collect frameworks/examples from existing models (AR, RAE, etc.); distill current in-hand information; circulate information; start notifying participants.	Robin	12/10
2. Re-convene, review current info and examples and choose best model (or combination).	Robin	1/14/07
3. Revise model, ensure all parameters included (Technical Assistance?); construct final draft; design questionnaire.	Bruce	1/31/07
4. Collect comments from larger group of agencies regarding model.	Bruce	2/15/07
5. Finish collection of information.	Bruce	3/15/07
6. Solicit comment/review by larger group of agencies.	Bruce	4/1/07
7. Set up access/sharing of information.	Bruce	4/15/07
Strategy 2: FY 06 Accomplishments report		
1. Identify agency contacts to provide information; include list of workshop contacts; engage federal caucus of NFHAP.	Rosanna Barkawi (Robin)	11/30
2. Solicit "data call" for accomplishments.		
3. Finalize product.		April '07

Focus Area: Technical Assistance

Lead: Howard Hankin

Facilitator: Jenni Wallace (NOAA)

Note taker: Jeff Smith (NOAA)

Participants

- Leigh McDougal (USFS)
- John Catena (NOAA)
- Jodi Staebell (USACE)
- Sonja Jahrsdoerfer (FWS)
- Larry Miller (FWS)
- Donald Pritchard (BLM)
- Joan Harn (NPS)
- Daniel Meyer (NRCS)

Current Situation

1. What are the most critical contextual factors that this community should be aware of for this focus area?

- Multiple resources available, but we need to make the whole federal family aware of this technical assistance (e.g., facilitation, funding, design/engineering, training, local knowledge)
- There is limited design/engineering expertise and larger structural solutions
- Few are prioritizing based on ecosystem need for passage
- Some agencies are more suited to providing technical assistance

2. What is the general state of cross-Agency collaboration (or lack thereof) in this focus area?

- *(See detailed Session Notes for notes on TA activities for Forest Service, NOAA, Corps, FWS and FWS-NER, BLM, NPS, and NRCS)*
- Tech assistance is an important commodity that agencies can provide

Key Strategies

- **Identify agency TA expertise and capabilities.**
 - Define by topic and by region
- **Identify and address TA gaps and needs for fish passage projects.**
 - Consider expertise, capability and capacity
- **Develop a “Who’s Who” for fish passage technical assistance.**
 - Identify expertise and capabilities across Agencies, NGOs and other watershed groups
 - Identify how Federal community can support these partners

Focus Area: Technical Assistance

Action Plan:

Action	Lead	Due Date
Strategy 1: Identify agency TA expertise and capabilities.		
1. Establish working group to develop interagency survey (or data site) to identify contacts and capabilities.	FWS & NOAA Leslie Hartsell	Committee by: 3/1/07; Survey by 9/1/07
2. Compile information into useful catalog.	TBD	TBD
3. Disseminate information to appropriate parties.	TBD	TBD
Strategy 2: Identify and address TA gaps and needs for fish passage projects.		
1. Establish working group to determine strategy (see two items below).	TBD	TBD
2. Review results from Strategy 1 to identify and address critical gaps in technical assistance delivery.	TBD	TBD
3. Commission white paper on federal and non-federal technical needs (e.g. American Rivers) and make recommendations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a statement of work via interagency working group 	TBD	TBD
Strategy 3: Develop a “Who’s Who” for fish passage technical assistance.		
1. Solicit workshop participants to identify agency contacts for fish passage technical assistance.	Howard Hankin	12/31/06
2. Expand to include NGOs and other watershed groups.		

Focus Area: Science and Evaluation

Lead: Doug Beard

Facilitator: Melanie Gange (NOAA)

Note taker: Jason Goldberg

Participants

- Mark Hudy (USFS)
- Mike Langeslay (USACE)
- Noah Adams (USGS)
- Ellen Cummings (USACE)
- Jim MacCartney (NPS/TU)
- John Nestler (USACE)
- Joe Moreau (BLM)

Current Situation

1. What are the most critical contextual factors that this community should be aware of for this focus area?

- There is a need for evaluation and monitoring of projects, and development of effective performance measures.
- People are willing to collaborate and contribute funding to shared needs.
- There is a need for basic research (life history, timing, etc.).
- There are existing resources for sharing information, technologies, etc. that can be taken advantage of.

2. What is the general state of cross-Agency collaboration (or lack thereof) in this focus area?

- Collaboration is generally good on Regional/Basin level, but not nationally.
- There have been several efforts to improve national and international efforts, but they have not really gone anywhere. People are willing to keep trying!

Key Strategies

- **Develop clearinghouse and portal to include toolbox and reference information**
 - Include a closed site for sharing information under development and a list of “expert” teams for consultation as needed
- **Develop process to determine key research needs and opportunities to collaborate on research.**
- **Develop performance measures for evaluating success.**

Action Plan:

Action	Lead	Due Date
Strategy 1: Develop clearinghouse and portal to include toolbox and reference information.		
1. Identify elements of ideal clearinghouse and develop “straw man.”	All Team Members	2/1/07
2. Report on what information is already available.	Mark Hudy	2/1/07
3. Review information from (2) and data-mine it to determine Regional connections, develop “who’s who” of expertise, and identify links between information.	Doug Beard (through NBII)	3/15/07
4. Ask each agency to suggest experts for “who’s who” list.	All meeting participants.	3/15/07
5. Assess websites and develop suggested ways for hosting information.	Doug Beard (through NBII)	5/1/07
Strategy 2: Develop process to determine key research needs and opportunities to collaborate on research.		
1. Each agency will designate one member to serve on an interagency research team. The team will be used to identify strategies and approaches to address unmet research needs and avoid duplication.	All Team Members (USGS, Lead)	2/1/07 (convened)
2. Conduct internal survey of all agency research capabilities and needs.	All Team Members	2/1/07
3. Conduct external survey of partner/stakeholder research capabilities and needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agencies with grant program need to query grant recipients 	Agency POC's	4/1/07
Strategy 3: Develop performance measures for evaluating success.		
1. Consult with National Fish Habitat Action Plan’s performance measures subcommittee.	Doug Beard	12/1/06
2. Compile and review existing performance measures related to fish passage, and determine next steps, if needed.	All Team Members	2/1/07
3. Consult with partnerships (e.g. Gulf of Maine, Pacific Northwest Monitoring and Assessment Program (PNMAP)), and others about fish barrier project performance measures.	Jim MacCartney (GOM), Mike Langeslay (PNMAP)	2/1/07

Workshop Organizing Committee

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